

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) A method for tracking physical location of prescription orders through a pharmacy having a plurality of physically spaced apart locations for manually filling and storing the prescription orders, the plurality of spaced apart locations being positioned along a workflow stream leading to a storage area with an array of compartments for storing filled prescription orders therein, prescription orders being moved between the plurality of spaced apart locations by one or more pharmacy workers by hand, said method including the following steps:

receiving plural prescription orders at a first location upstream of the storage area;

operably securing a separate machine-readable tag to each prescription order upstream of said storage area, each said tag having a unique identifier that is readable by a tag reader in proximity to the tag regardless of its orientation relative to the tag reader;

associating the unique identifier of each tag with customer information stored in a computer system in association with the prescription order;

moving the prescription orders by hand to a second location within the pharmacy for manual filling upstream of the storage area, the second location having a second location tag reader in communication with the computer system;

automatically detecting the presence of the prescription orders at the second location by reading the unique identifier of the remote tags with said second location tag reader regardless of the orientation of said tags and automatically recording at the computer system the location of the prescription orders at said second location for the manual filling;

moving each of the prescription orders by hand to one of the compartments in the array of compartments as a filled prescription order, each compartment having a

corresponding compartment tag reader that is in communication with the computer system and is operable to read the unique identifier of the tag on the filled prescription order regardless of the orientation of the tag,

whereby the step of associating the unique identifier of each tag with customer information and the step of automatically detecting the presence of the prescription orders are performed by or under control of the computer system.

2. (previously presented) A method for tracking physical location of prescription orders through a pharmacy of claim 1, further including the steps of:

displaying on a computer system the compartment in which any selected prescription order is stored, thereby facilitating the easy location of said prescription order.

3. (cancelled)

4. (previously presented) A method for tracking physical location of prescription orders through a pharmacy of claim 1, further including the steps of:

automatically collecting timing information about the amount of time each of the prescription orders remains at the second location;

storing said timing information into the computer system; and,

compiling workflow information based on the timing information.

5. (previously presented) A method for tracking physical location of prescription orders through a pharmacy of claim 4, further including the step of:

associating the workflow information with a particular worker to evaluate worker efficiency.

6. (previously presented) A method for tracking physical location of prescription orders through a pharmacy of claim 1, wherein said pharmacy is a retail pharmacy.

7 - 43. (cancelled)

44. (previously presented) A method for ensuring that a pharmacy worker distributes the correct prescription order to a customer of the pharmacy, the pharmacy having a storage portion with an array of individually identified storage areas therein, each individually identified storage area having a unique visual identifier, said method comprising:

receiving a prescription order at a first location spaced apart from the storage area within the pharmacy;

operably securing a machine-readable tag to the prescription order, the machine-readable tag having a unique tag identifier readable when placed in proximity to a tag reader regardless of orientation of the tag relative to the tag reader;

associating the machine-readable tag with customer information associated with the prescription order in the computer system;

manually filling the prescription order defining a filled prescription order;

placing the filled prescription order and the machine-readable tag by hand into one individually identified storage area of the plurality of individually identified storage areas without instructions from the computer system as to which individually identified storage area the filled prescription order and the machine-readable tag are to be placed into thereby defining a pharmacy worker selected storage area;

reading the unique tag identifier of the tag within the pharmacy worker selected storage area with a tag reader that is associated with the pharmacy worker selected storage area, but not with any other individually identified storage areas in the array;

providing the unique tag identifier and the storage area identifier for the pharmacy worker selected storage area to the computer system;

the computer system correlating the customer information, unique tag identifier, and

storage area identifier;

retrieving the customer information from the computer system to determine the storage area identifier associated with the pharmacy worker selected storage area in which the customer's filled prescription order is located; and,

retrieving the filled prescription order by hand from the identified pharmacy worker selected storage area of the storage portion.

45. (previously presented) The method of claim 44, wherein said tag is a radio-frequency identification ("RFID") tag and said tag readers are RFID readers.

46. (previously presented) The method of claim 44, wherein said storage area identifier is not related to information contained within the customer information.

47. (previously presented) The method of claim 44, wherein said storage area identifier is numeric.

48. (previously presented) The method of claim 44, further including:

detecting the removal of the filled prescription order and its associated tag from the pharmacy worker selected storage area by the tag reader associated with the pharmacy worker selected storage area.

49. (previously presented) The method of claim 48, further including:

monitoring with the computer system the time the filled prescription order and its associated tag remains within the pharmacy worker selected storage area; and

returning the filled prescription order to stock if the prescription order is not picked up within a predefined time limit.

50. (previously presented) The method of claim 44, further including placing a second filled prescription order with a second unique remote tag operably secured thereto within the pharmacy worker selected storage area such that the filled prescription order and the second filled prescription order concurrently occupy the same pharmacy

worker selected storage area, and wherein the computer system associates customer identifying information for the second filled prescription, the second prescription order and the storage identifier.

51. (previously presented) The method of claim 50, wherein the computer system detects the removal of the prescription order from the pharmacy selected storage area during the retrieving the prescription order step, and detects the continued presence of the second prescription order within the pharmacy selected storage area during the retrieving the prescription order step.

52 - 61 (cancelled)

62. (currently amended) A method for tracking physical location of prescription orders through a pharmacy having a plurality of physically spaced apart locations for manual filling and storing the prescription orders, the plurality of spaced apart locations being positioned along a workflow stream leading to a storage area with an array of compartments for storing filled prescription orders therein, prescription orders being moved between the plurality of spaced apart locations by one or more pharmacy workers by hand, said method including the following steps:

receiving plural prescription orders at a first location upstream of the storage area;

operably securing machine-readable tags to the prescription orders upstream of said storage area, each said tag having a unique identifier that is readable by a tag reader in proximity to the tag regardless of its orientation relative to the tag reader;

associating the unique identifiers of the tags with customer information stored in a computer system in association with the prescription orders;

moving the prescription orders by hand to a second location within the pharmacy for manual filling upstream of the storage area, the second location having a second location tag reader in communication with the computer system;

automatically detecting the presence of the prescription orders at the second location by reading the unique identifier of the remote tags with said second location tag

reader regardless of the orientation of said tags and automatically recording at the computer system the location of the prescription orders at said second location for manual filling; and

moving the prescription orders by hand to one or more of the compartments in the array of compartments as filled prescription orders, each compartment having a corresponding compartment tag reader that is in communication with the computer system and is operable to read the unique identifier of the tag on each filled prescription order in the compartment regardless of the orientation of the tag,

whereby the step of associating the unique identifier of each tag with customer information and the step of automatically detecting the presence of the prescription orders are performed by or under control of the computer system.

63. (previously presented) A method for tracking physical location of prescription orders through a pharmacy of claim 62, further including the steps of:

displaying on a computer system the compartment in which any selected prescription order was stored by hand, thereby facilitating the easy location of said prescription order by a pharmacy worker.

64. (cancelled)

65. (previously presented) The method of claim 62, further including:

detecting removal of a filled prescription order and its associated tag from a selected compartment in the storage area with the compartment tag reader corresponding to the selected compartment.